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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 002419

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [PINR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT DIYALA: POLITICAL INFIGHTING UNDERMINES
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

REF: A) BAGHDAD 981 B) BAGHDAD 712

Classified By: Diyala PRT Leader George White for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

1.(U) This is a PRT Diyala cable.

¶2. (C) Summary: During recent meetings with the PRT, local Da'wa party members blamed provincial problems on the malfeasance and incompetence of the Sunni-led provincial government (PG) while local Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) leaders accused the central government of undermining the PG's efforts. Da'wa party officials accused local Diyala Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) officials of bias and fraud, while IIP members asserted central IHEC officials were undermining fairness among political parties in Diyala. Da'wa party members expressed confidence in their ability to emerge victorious in the upcoming elections. Local IIP party members asserted that the PG was being targeted by central government ministry and security forces for political reasons, thus undermining the chances for a fair election. End summary.

DA'WA ASSERTS DIYALA GOVERNMENT BREACHING PROVINCIAL POWERS
LAW

¶3. (C) On August 19, Da'wa Diyala representatives (PC Council member Esam Shakir Mezahir Abud, Prime Minister's Diyala Representative Ibraheem Chalooob Ghalib, and Da'wa local party leader Abdul-Aziz Abu Ahmed Al Khalisi) told PRToffs that the Diyala Provincial Government (PG) was violating aspects of the Provincial Powers Law (PPL). They claimed that a provincial judge failed to take the proper oath of office in violation of PPL Article 49, that Deputy Governor Muhamed Jasim did not have a required educational certificate, and that some PC members had failed to attend four PC sessions and should be reviewed by the Provincial Council (PC) Integrity Committee for dismissal. (Note: IIP PC members Khalil and Farhan have missed more than four sessions subsequent to efforts by Iraqi security forces to execute arrest warrants (ref A). End note). The representatives said the current PC was "paralyzed," that it was not representative and that they were working with the PM's office to resolve PG problems.

DA'WA CONFIDENT ABOUT UPCOMING ELECTIONS

¶4. (C) The Da'wa party members were confident of their chances in the upcoming election, asserting that 70 percent of Iraqis would vote, and that more than half would vote for Da'wa. They pointed to Da'wa winning a majority of the votes in the Sunni areas of Katoon, Buhriz and Tahrir during the PC elections despite "IHEC fraud." (Comment: The Da'wa party has repeated this accusation of fraud since the January 2009 PC elections, but it has not been substantiated by polling data. End comment.) The representatives said that IDP compensation was encouraging many Iraqis to return home to the province

and that this would help boost turnout. (Note: PRT review of the first four recipient lists last year revealed that primarily Shi'a families are returning.) The party members encouraged the PRT to assist IHEC with voter outreach.

DA'WA ACCUSES IHEC OF BIAS AND FRAUD

15. (C) The Da'wa party members accused the Independent High Election Commission (IHEC) of fraud and bias against sects and political parties which was reminiscent of accusations against IHEC and the Diyala Governorate Elections Office after the January 2009 PC elections (ref B). They said they had documented IHEC's many failings and intended to bring IHEC before the CoR for questioning. They stated that IHEC's main failing in Diyala was its handling of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). They said 13,000 IDPs returned home to QPersons (IDPs). They said 13,000 IDPs returned home to Diyala out of a total 30,000 Diyala IDPs, but that these individuals could not vote in the previous PC elections due to IHEC's mishandling of IDP registration and the "101 form," which allows voters to cast a ballot even if they are not on the registry for a particular polling stations. (Note: Sunnis and Kurds also complained about their IDPs being left off voter lists during the PC elections. End note.)

IIP ASSERTS LOCATION OF VOTER REGISTRATION CENTERS UNFAIR

16. (C) During an August 20 meeting, Diyala Iraqi Islamic Party (IIP) representatives (IIP Diyala Party Leader Wisam Mahmod Mohamed, Baquba IIP Leader Mohamed Shamel, and IIP

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branch officer Omar Ali,) also voiced complaints about IHEC. The IIP party leaders stated that the central IHEC Commissioners did not distribute the voter registration centers (VRC) in Diyala in an equitable manner and that IHEC VRC staff were not representative of all parties, especially those in Khan Bani Saad, Abu Saayda, Central Baqubah, and Al Albara - where they said Shi'a were disproportionately represented. They asserted that IHEC staff was not distributing the VRC cards door-to-door as required, but instead giving VRC cards to local public distribution system (PDS) agents and sheiks - giving these local leaders improper influence on the voters.

DIYALA IIP MEMBERS CONCERNED PROVINCIAL GOV'T BEING UNDERMINED

17. (C) The IIP party members also asserted that the central government was undermining the Diyala PG and its credibility for political reasons. They said that central government targeting of PC members for detention by its security forces and its failure to provide adequate budgetary support would make it easier for parties not currently in the provincial government (i.e. Shi'a parties) to win in the upcoming election because citizens were getting an inaccurate perception of the current PG's efforts on their behalf. The IIP members pleaded for the PRT to help the PG publicize its good works and build confidence among Diyala's citizens.

18. (C) The IIP leaders voiced concerned about ongoing instability in Diyala, raising special concern about the Arab-Kurd areas of Jallula and Saadiya. They also identified the potential for Sunni-Shi'a tensions in Khalis, especially during the election campaign. The IIP members said most of Diyala IDP's came from Khalis, Al Abara, Al Askaree in Muqdadiya, Abu Saayda, Tahrir, Buhriz, Al Mafriq and Katoon. They said many Shi'a families had returned to places like Buhriz and Tahrir, but that few Sunni families had returned to areas in Khalis and those that did were threatened or killed. They requested the PRT carefully monitor these areas during the election season.

19. (C) COMMENT: The continued accusations by Da'wa party leaders that it was IHEC fraud that cost Da'wa victory in the Diyala PC elections suggest they are setting up IHEC as a possible scapegoat if they fall short of expectations. The local Da'wa party leaders efforts to discredit majority party members of the PG, in addition to earlier assassinations and arrests of top IIP members, appear to be having the intended effect of undermining the Sunni-led government by demoralizing its IIP leadership and reducing its organizational capacity. End comment.
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